

## INSURE YOUR PROPERTY

Everyone is at risk of flooding. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover for damage caused by natural flooding. However, because Scituate participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the Federal Government and is available to everyone, even properties that have flooded.

If you don't know what kind of flood hazard zone your property is located, please refer to the first presentation in this series entitled, Know Your Risk. If your property is in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and you have a mortgage, you were required by your bank to purchase flood insurance. You may want to be sure you also have contents coverage as this is a separate NFIP policy and is also available to all residents in the City of Batavia.

If your property is not located in the SFHA, you may qualify for a lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy. These policies are very affordable and provide the comfort of knowing your home and contents are safe from flood damage.

Let's review some of the myths about Flood Insurance Coverage:

1. FEMA only pays me if my area is declared a state of emergency anyway, so I don't need insurance. This is false. The National Flood Insurance Program pays out for all flooding damage to its policy holders. Let's look at FEMA's definition of a flood:
  - *A general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of 2 or more acres of normally dry land area or of 2 or more properties (at least 1 of which is the policyholder's property) from:*
    - Overflow of inland or tidal waters; or*
    - Unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source; or*
    - Mudflow; or*
  - *Collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or similar body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels that result in a flood as defined above.*

The first bullet is the flooding condition that applies to Batavia residents. A flood has to have impacted your (the policyholder's) property and one other property. That doesn't mean the other property has to make a claim, it just means that at least one other property in the City had to experience at least a partial inundation of water from an overflow or runoff of the Tonawanda Creek or any low-level ponding area in the City.

2. If there is a really bad flood in Batavia, the City will be declared a state of emergency, and I'll get help anyway, because FEMA will pay for my damage. This is FALSE. When FEMA reaches out during an emergency to a community, those community members are offered low interest loans from FEMA to repair damage. It is ONLY the insurance policy holders who receive money without having to have it loaned to them. With no NFIP insurance, you have no coverage – no matter where you live.
3. My sump pump quit working last spring and my basement flooded and my insurance company covered our damage, so I already have flood insurance. This is misleading. If your sump pump fails to function and creates basement flooding, this is flooding caused by a mechanical failure and is covered under your homeowner's insurance. Flooding that seeps in from groundwater from any runoff surface is considered a flood. Damage in this case would not be covered by your homeowner's policy. A NFIP policy would cover this if at least one other resident had experienced the same type flooding.

### **So how do I know how much flood insurance would cost me?**

Flood insurance rates are determined by the base flood elevation of your home or business and compared to the base flood elevation of your property. To determine this number, you must have a flood elevation certificate. Flood Elevation Certificates must be prepared by a licensed surveyor, engineer or architect. The cost for a flood elevation certificate can run anywhere from \$175 to \$500. Use your Internet's search engine to find someone in your area or consult the local yellow pages.

Once you obtain an elevation certificate, you can call your insurance agent to obtain a rate quote for flood insurance.